

Natural gas line to coast planned

[By Steven Oberbeck](#)
[The Salt Lake Tribune](#)

Article Last Updated: 11/02/2007 11:05:49 PM MDT

One of the country's largest pipeline companies is considering building a \$3 billion line that would link natural gas fields in Utah, Wyoming and southwestern Colorado with northern California and the Pacific Northwest.

Spectra Energy Corp. of Houston said its proposed Bronco line would stretch more than 650 miles and be capable of moving a billion cubic feet of natural gas per day to markets along the West Coast.

The project is one of several on the table designed to move more natural gas out of the Rockies to feed energy-hungry consumers nationwide.

"The demand for natural gas is increasing in those areas, and there is a real need for additional natural gas supplies to serve them," said Guy Buckley, vice president of corporate development at Spectra.

Buckley said that Utah and other natural gas-producing states in the Rocky Mountain region are poised to eventually overtake the Gulf of Mexico as the largest domestic source of the fuel used to heat homes and run power plants.

Yet there remains a lack of pipeline capacity to move natural gas out of the Rocky Mountain states, which has created an oversupply of the fuel that has kept prices down for producers in the region, Buckley said. The surplus has benefited the region's consumers by providing them with comparatively lower rates.

Suppliers in the Rockies so far this year have received an average of \$4.66 per for each 1,000 cubic feet of production, compared with \$6.94 for the gas flowing through the Henry hub in Louisiana, which is the main natural gas pricing point for much of the eastern half of the nation.

The Bronco pipeline is scheduled for completion in 2011.

Spectra isn't the only company that sees a need for more pipeline capacity to move natural gas out of the region. Kinder Morgan Energy Partners is building a \$4.4 billion pipeline that is designed to carry additional natural gas from the region to the East Coast.

And, the Salt Lake City-based Kern River Gas Transmission Co., which in 2003 completed a massive 1 billion-cubic-feet-per-day expansion of its Kern River Pipeline that runs from Wyoming, through Utah and Nevada into Southern California, is considering expanding that pipeline's capacity once again.

Kern River Gas President Michael Dunn said Friday the company is soliciting long-term contracts from producers to ensure it has enough business to justify increasing the capacity of the Kern River Pipeline by another 200 million to 500 million cubic feet per day.

"We believe the timing is right to once again expand the Kern River system," Dunn said.

"We're seeing increased production of natural gas in the Rockies and increasing demand in the market area along our pipeline system."

Construction of the Kern River expansion is expected to be completed in November 2010.

Questar Corp. also is in the expansion mode.

It plans next year to build a natural gas pipeline hub in northwestern Colorado that would link six pipelines serving the region to increase and ease the flow of natural gas to markets in the Midwest and along the West Coast.

steve@sltrib.com